

AIR COMBAT COMMAND'S COMM AND INFO DIRECTOR ADDRESSES READINESS & AEF CYCLES

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Are you Ready?

From
the Top



It's all about putting the right force at the right place.

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. — Greetings from the home of Air Combat Command. I've been on board for almost four months, and I'm loving every minute of it. I wanted to pass along some nuggets of wisdom, but after careful review, felt my boss, Gen. Hal Hornburg's, commander of Air Combat Command, advice and expectations to his wing commanders is pretty straightforward and spot on with where our Air Force is heading.

He asks only three things from his wing commanders: First he expects them to develop and nurture Airmen; Secondly he wants them to be prepared to deploy when called to duty; and finally to be ready to fight when ordered." That is sound advice to all of us and tracks well with where the Air Force is heading.

The Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. John Jumper, recently published two sight pictures; the first dealing with the Expeditionary Air Force mindset, and the second, expanding the Aerospace Expeditionary Force window from three to four months. I don't think this is a MAJCOM-specific issue, so I wanted to say a couple of things about what I see comm and info professionals doing to meet the CSAF's objectives.

A recurring challenge is how do we posture our people and our equipment to best support the warfighter?

The first CSAF sight picture is pretty clear, and emphasizes what we all have come to expect—if you're in an AEF, expect to go. The AEF is no longer a buzzword, but a way of life—it's become a part of our doctrine.

This makes it incumbent upon all of us as communicators — as Airmen — to do anything and everything to ensure we're ready to respond to that call to duty, as well as those under our charge. That means taking any and every advantage to train and prepare for deployment, putting everyone possible into the AEF buckets. I can confidently say that comm — across the board — has met the CSAF challenge, and we're answering that call.

The second sight picture, and perhaps the one freshest in everyone's mind, is the change of the AEF rotation from three to four months, and the corresponding change in AEF cycle duration from 16 to 20 months. The Chief stated that the change was needed in order to bring us in-line with other service rotation cycles.

As it is, the Army uses a one-year rotation cycle and the Navy uses a six-month cycle, so increasing the Air Force cycle to four months reflects the current mission need.

I want to point out the benefits to this AEF rotation change. We get a four-to-one payoff. Four additional months at home for one extra month deployed. This is a substantial adjustment operationally. It improves the rotation cycle for everyone — more time to reconstitute personnel and equipment; more time in the saddle at a deployed location, which will inevitably improve performance through continuity; and more time to train and prepare for deployment.

I look forward to the new expanded AEF rotation...for all the benefits it'll bring...and for the continued commitment it'll display to our sister services. Remember, we exist to support the Air Force mission and national objectives — at home and abroad.

Stay tuned. The changes the Air Force is making are creating a more flexible and responsive force. In the end it's all about putting the right force at the right place.

Be good, be safe — think AEF.

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